

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MARTIN 00189 170017Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 AGRE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05
/102 W

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R 151215Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2901
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MARTINIQUE 0189

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FW
SUBJECT: ELECTION 1978 - AUTONOMY IS THE ISSUE

REF: (A) MARTINIQUE 0131, (B) MARTINIQUE 0172

1. THE MARCH 12 ELECTIONS RETURNED TO THE FRENCH ASSEMBLY FROM MARTINIQUE AND FRENCH GUIANA THE FOUR INCUMBENTS: MARTINIQUE-AIME CESAIRE, CAMILLE PETIT, AND VICTOR SABLE. FRENCH GUIANA - HECTOR RIVIEREZ. GUADELOUPE WAS UNABLE TO DECIDE. THE FINAL DECISION THERE WILL REST UPON THE OUTCOME OF THE SECOND ROUND.

2. THE CENTRAL CAMPAIGN ISSUE HERE AND IN GUADELOUPE WAS THE QUESTION OF LOCAL AUTONOMY. IN MARTINIQUE THE DEBATE WAS BETWEEN AIME CESAIRE AND MICHEL RENARD. THINKING THE VOTERS FAVORED THE STATUS QUO, RENARD AND PRESIDENT EMILE MAURICE, RPR, UNFORTUNATELY CHOSE (SEE REF A) OPPOSITION TO AUTONOMY AS THEIR CENTRAL THEME.

3. BOTH CESAIRE AND RENARD STRESSED THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF CHANGE. RENARD STRESSED THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED FRENCH ASSISTANCE WITHOUT WHICH, HE SAID, THE CITIZENS OF MARTINIQUE WOULD FACE THE LOSS OF THEIR PRESENT HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING. CESAIRE'S COUNTER, DRAWING UPON HIS ENORMOUS PRESTIGE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MARTIN 00189 170017Z

AND DEBATING SKILL, WAS THAT INDEED ECONOMY WAS THE ISSUE. HE DECLARED MARTINIQUE TO BE THE VICTIM OF COMMON MARKET DISCRIMINATION, NOTING THAT MARTINIQUE IS FORCED TO RECEIVE FAVORABLY PRODUCTS OF COMMON MARKET COUNTRIES AND THAT THESE COUNTRIES RESIST IMPORTING MARTINIQUEAN RUM, BANANAS, PINEAPPLE, SUGAR, ETC.

4. INFORMED SOURCES HERE TELL US THAT THIS IS FIRST ELECTION IN

WHICH THE ISSUE OF AUTONOMY HAS BEEN WIDELY DEBATED. FROM
GUADELOUPE WE UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE RECEIVED SIMILAR ATTENTION,
BUT OBSERVERS HERE AND THERE, AUTONOMISTS AND PRO-DEPARTMENT-
ALISTS, REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THERE EXISTS A CONSIDERABLE LACK
OF PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING RE AUTONOMY. THE ISSUE OF AUTONOMY IS
NO LONGER A DORMANT ONE. IT IS CLEAR THIS ISSUE, NOW ENLIVENED,
WILL CONTINUE TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF POLITICIANS OF THE
FRENCH ANTILLES FOR SOME TIME TO COME.
ROBINSON

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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Message Attributes

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